

S565 AFOLAYAN, SULAIMAN KEHINDE NIGERIA JOURNAL TEAM 56 GEE 2011
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.

If you ever think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito!
– Wendy Lesko

Having participated in the 2011 Global Enterprise Experience, I considered myself extremely fortunate because my enrolment into the contest was a day late. I got to know about the contest from two friends of mine, Dr. M.O. Saibu and Agboola Olayode. Although it was almost impossible for me; at the late hour of registration, the internet connection was bad. The next day I visited a cyber café for internet service with the faint hope of getting something done. Thank God, it later worked out and I was very excited.

The three weeks participation in the 2011 International Business Contest, to me, was an unequalled experience. The contest was not only about report writing, it was more of diffusion of knowledge among people from different part of the globe. I never regretted borrowing some amount of money from a friend before the kick-off of the contest in order to replace the damaged battery of my *TOSHIBA NB-100Y* laptop with a new one that was damaged by unstable power supply. In addition, to finance a Multi-links modem with a 50-hour of browsing plan to be able to fully participate in, and contribute to the teamwork to the best of my ability. The costs were at the expense of my meagre monthly allowance, though, I have spread the repayment across five months for convenience.

We were seven in Team 56 from five different countries (Nigeria, Romania, Bangladesh, Colombia and New Zealand). Moreover, it was interesting for me to have participated. When I was introduced to *BaseCamp*, it initially seemed complex and I did not know how to use the features but I later found it very helpful in terms of communications with teammates, uploading and downloading files for reviews and adjustments, especially from and to one's email. The team leader (Reesha Ranchod) and Sumon (a team member) had posted their *Facebook* account links earlier, which I used to inform them about my communication challenges. The leader of the team then introduced me to *Skype* and I immediately registered for its services. However, the level of communication got better and faster among the team members.

Our challenges started few days after the commencement of the contest when I received messages from *BaseCamp* by two of our members from Romania that they will not be able to continue with us. I felt so weak after so much ado about working together with people of great minds but I never lost hopes in the team as a whole. Another challenge centred on the difference in time zones; we hardly meet online at the same time. Therefore, I made some researches and got different hours that we can be meeting online at the same time. The team finalized an appropriate hour for the meeting –12AM New Zealand time every day. The reconciliation in time was perfect for me and I did not miss the meetings any longer unless for few days when I got fatigued after I came down with typhoid fever. It required me to request some days off, and the team leader granted it.

The brainstorming aspect of the teamwork was very fascinating and revealing to me. It was then that I began to do research; I read and gathered vast information about Nigeria, Tanzania, United State of America and Mexico as well as their various regions. The task took over my mind that I sometimes forgot to take my breakfast even whilst I was on drugs to subdue the level of my fatigue. The contest had kept me abreast of first-hand information about my country especially on abundant of resources and on how these resources are mismanaged. In addition, it has improved the level of awareness in me in a way that I now have a different outlook to life. I visit family and friends now than usual. The ritual that heretofore I considered a mere waste of time and energy. It is not limited to my immediate family members; I now extend my newfound experience to students in schools in my community.

The journey got interesting when the team jointly decided on a topic based on carbonating a locally brewed drink, which originated from Zamfara State in Nigeria. The various aspects of the report were delegated even though we had only four active members at that time. I made a local market research on my part to get reliable data for the report. We submitted our aspect of the report, and the team leader successfully edited and finalized the business proposal.

The contest had indeed imparted on me greatly and it has blessed me with a better understanding of my country and other part of the world. Not only these, it has also emboldened me with self-confidence on how to go about my final year project in the university. I promise to disseminate the goodwill of GEEBIZ to my friends in other universities in Nigeria.

I give thanks to God, my friends and the organizers of the GEEBIZ, especially the Director-Deb Gilbertson for her warmth direction and concern. In addition, my gratitude goes to all the members of Team 56 GEE 2011, especially the team leader (Reesha) for good leadership, Juan, Sumon and Harold for their immeasurable contributions.

A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.
– George Bernard Shaw